The Next Steppe: Sage Grouse and Rangeland Wildfire in the Great Basin

Amy Lueders
State Director Nevada

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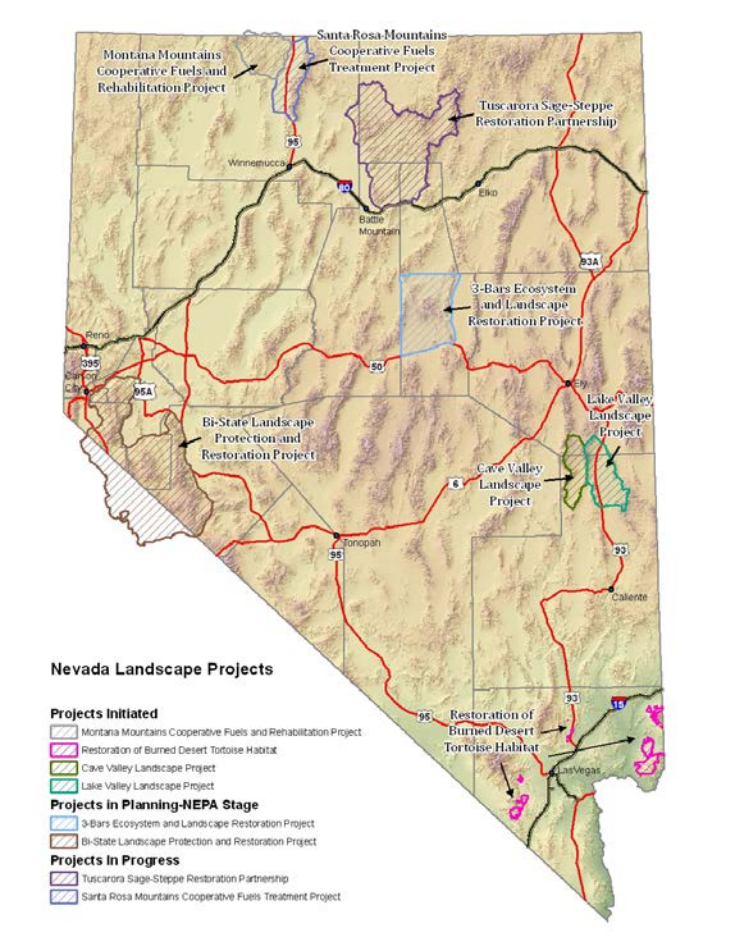
Sage Grouse and Rangeland Wildfire in the Great Basin

BLM's Landscape Scale Approach

- BLM is addressing complex and widespread environmental challenges that cross traditional boundaries.
- BLM's approach is to better understand these challenges and support balanced stewardship of resources of the public lands.
- The landscape approach informs and enhances local management.

Nevada's Landscape Approach Implementation



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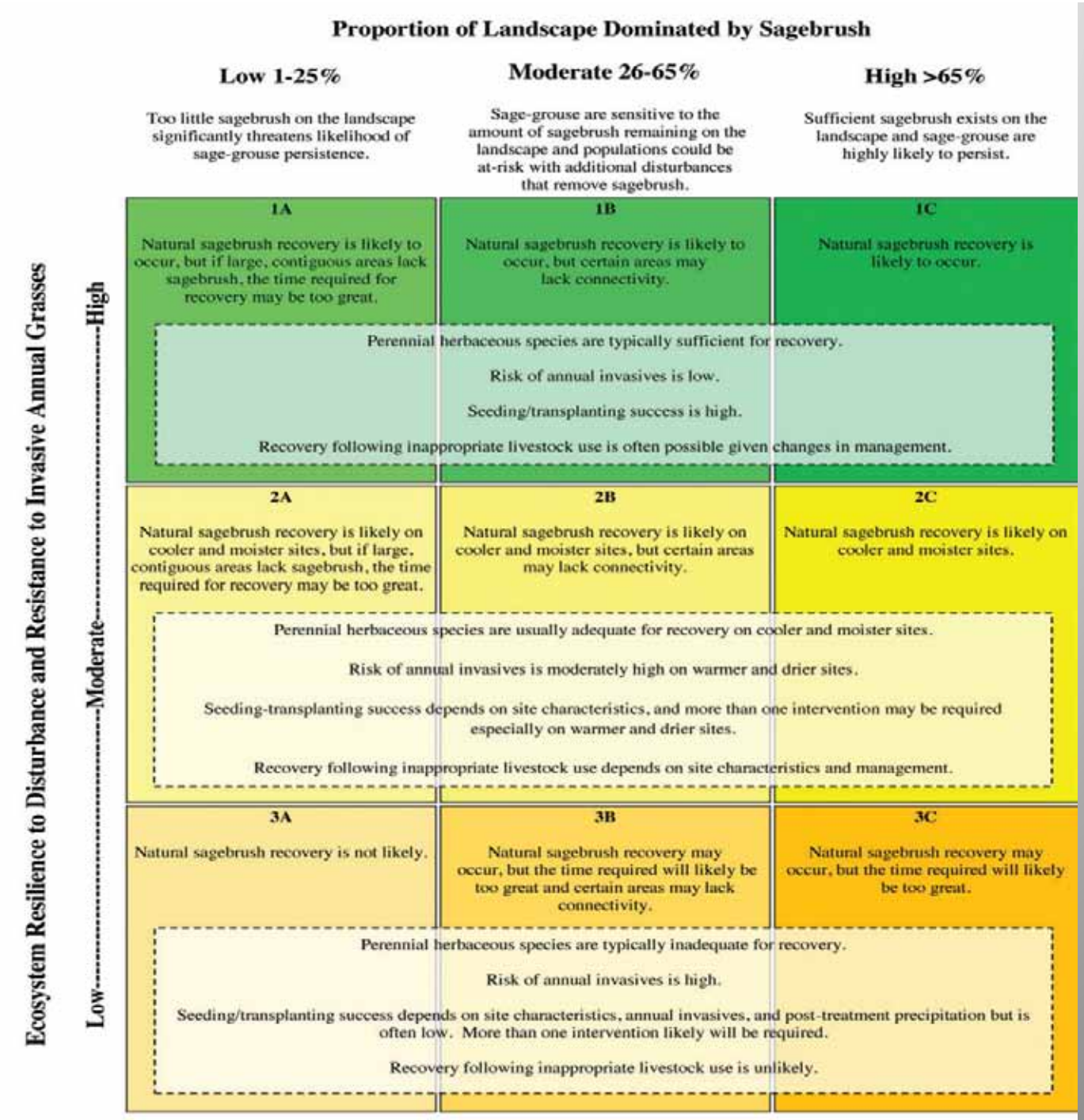
Resistance & Resilience

- Identify locations that provide current or potential habitat for sage grouse
- Prioritize management actions based on the capacity of ecosystem to respond in desired manner
- Based on soil temperature and soil moisture regimes



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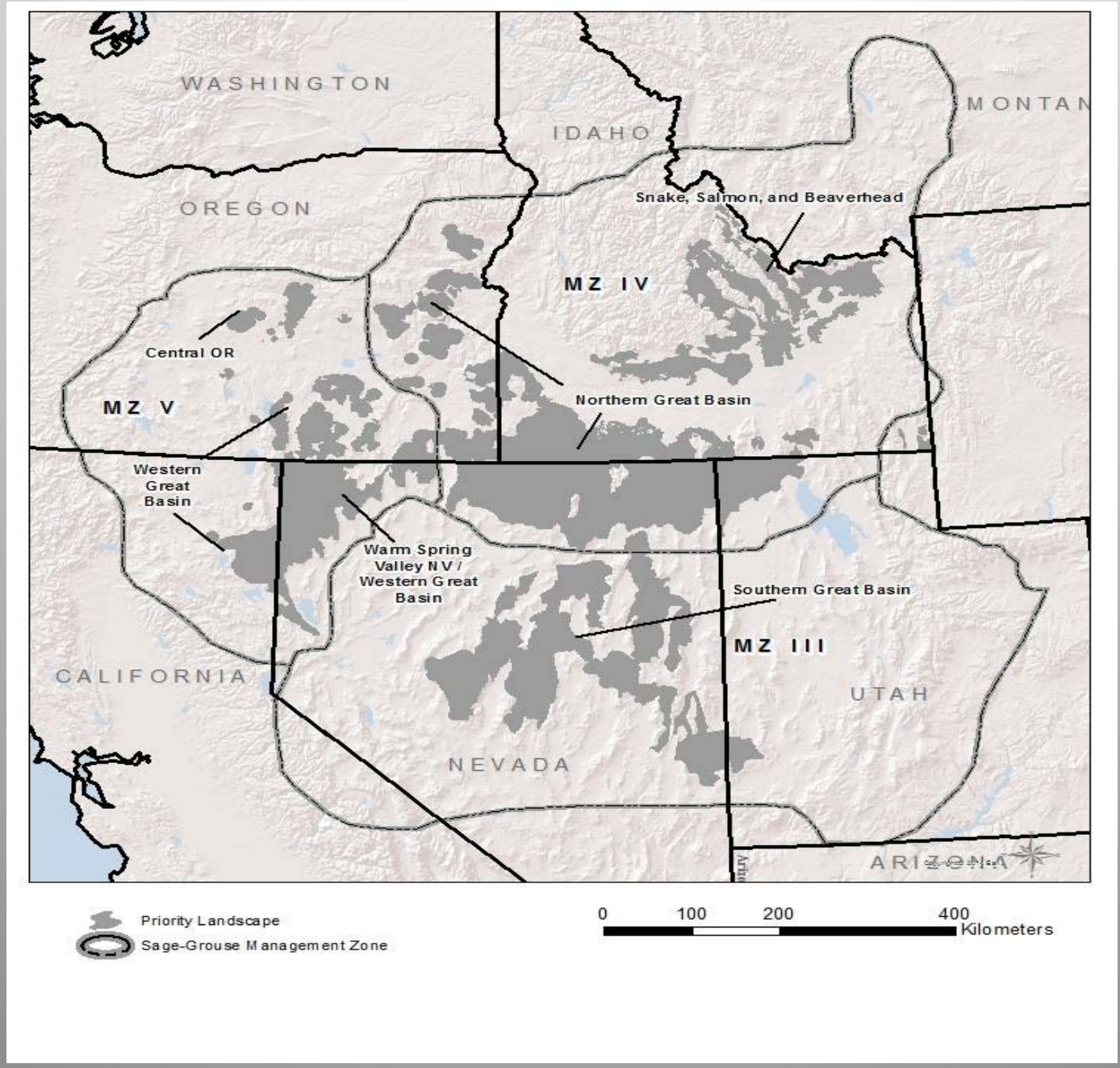

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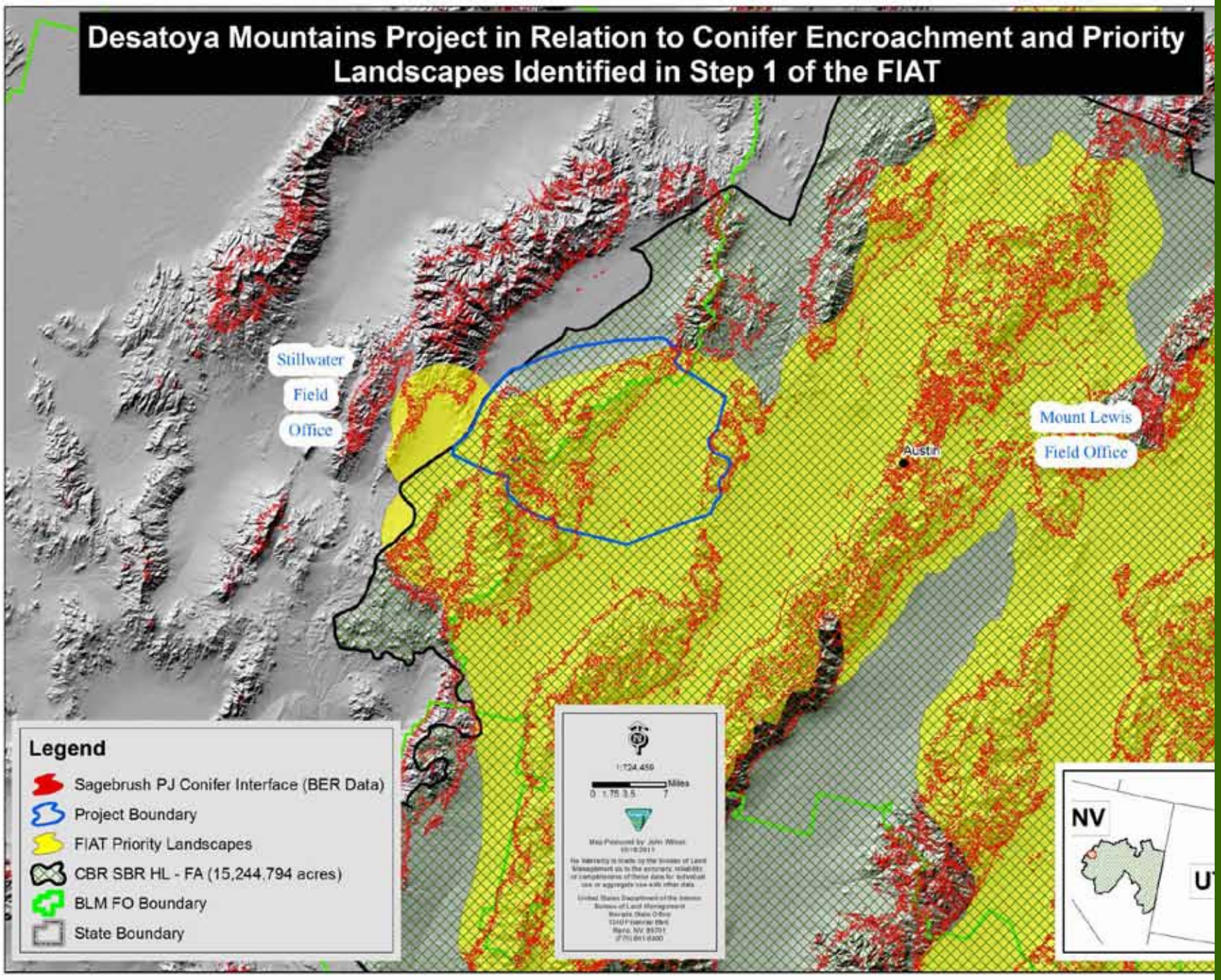

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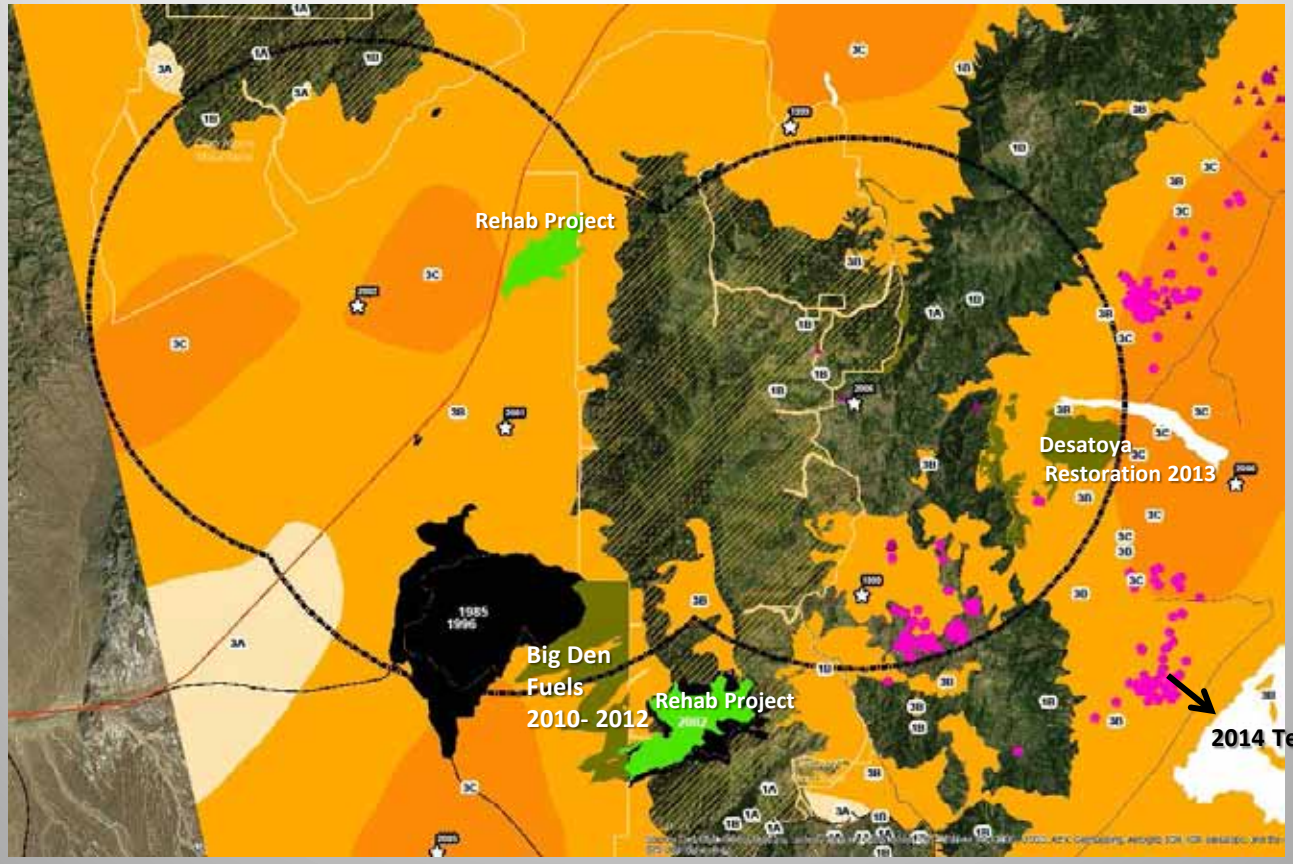

Desatoya Focal Habitat – Step 2 FIAT

This slide identifies previous fire scars (black), completed Rehab Projects (light green), Telemetry (pink), Fuels and Restoration Projects (olive green) low resistance and resilience areas (3A, 3B, 3C) have occurred in recent past using a landscape approach along with the telemetry data from 2014 from the FIAT Process.

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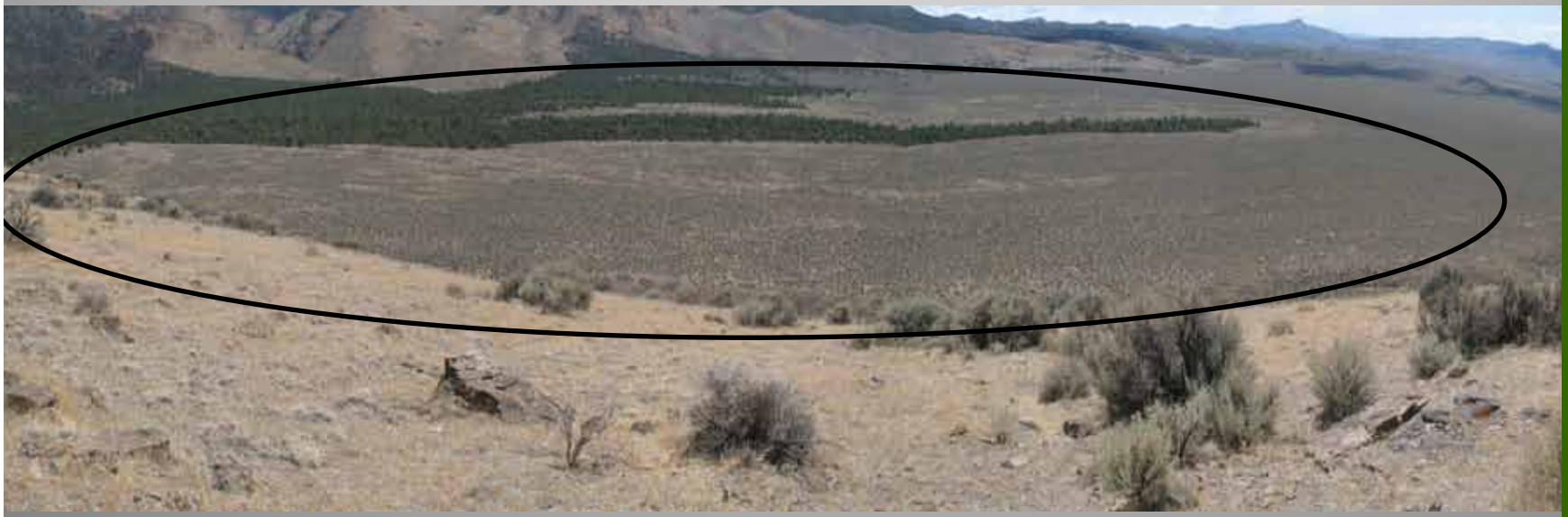
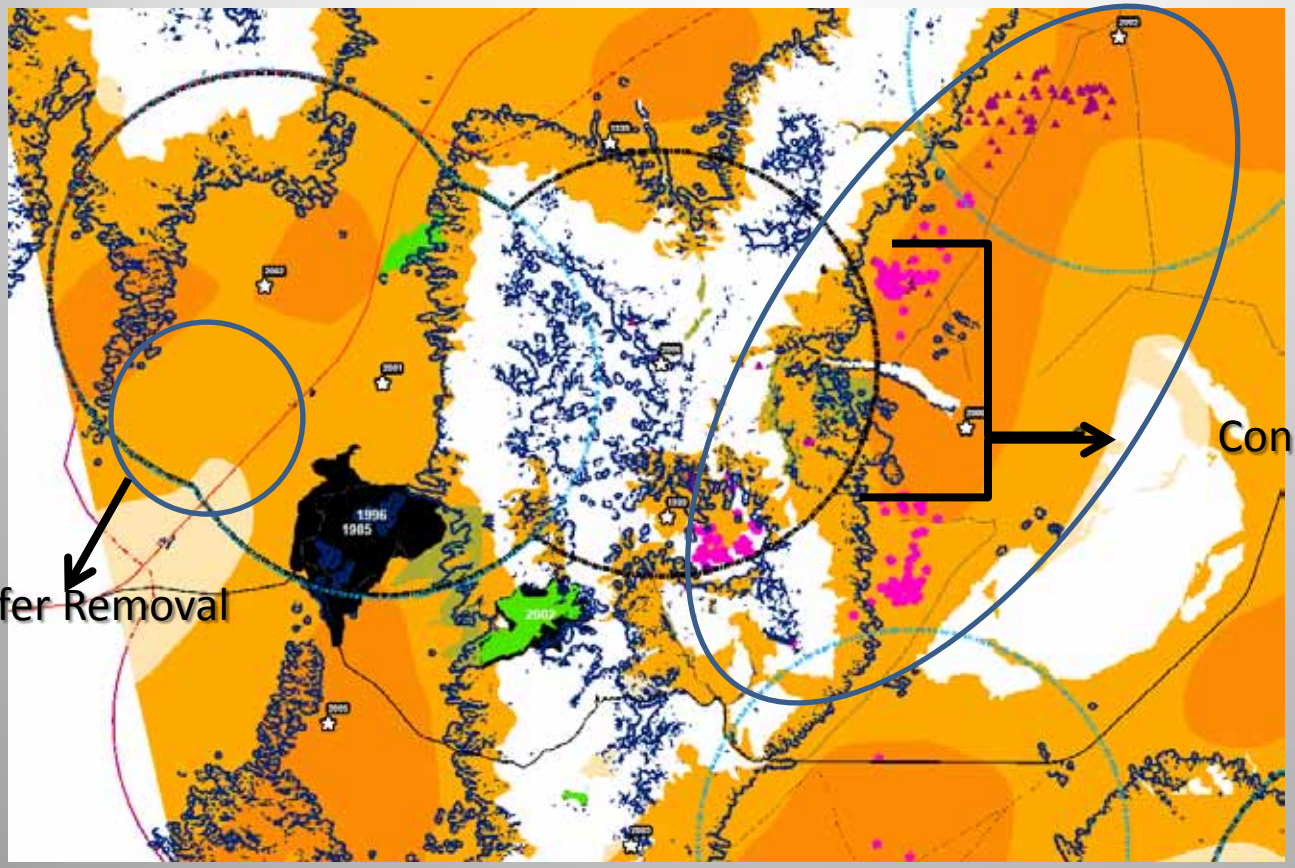
Big Den Project Before

Big Den Project After





Desatoya Focal Habitat – Step 2 FIAT Conifer Expansion

Planned conifer removal of 5142 acres of treatments FY 2016-2020 in Healthy Lands and 4930 acres of conifer encroachment removal in FY 2016-2020 in Fuels Management due to the risk of wildland fire. Along with proposed fuel breaks strategically located along road systems to protect low resistance and resilience areas. This assessment validated working on treatments already being completed and will expand this project in the future.

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Emergency Stabilization & Rehabilitation

- Esmeralda Fire 2005 northwest Elko County
- Burned 97,000 acres.
- A total of 28 leks were directly impacted by the fire and additional 9 leks were in close proximity to the fire perimeter.
- Area affected by the fire provided habitat for one of the highest documented sage grouse population densities in Nevada.
- Successful Rehabilitation seedings in cooperation with th Nevada Department of Wildlife and private land owner, Barrick (Squaw Valley Ranch) are providing nesting and brood rearing habitat. Sage grouse were documented us the seeded areas within three years of the fire.


Esmeralda Fire
April after fire occurred
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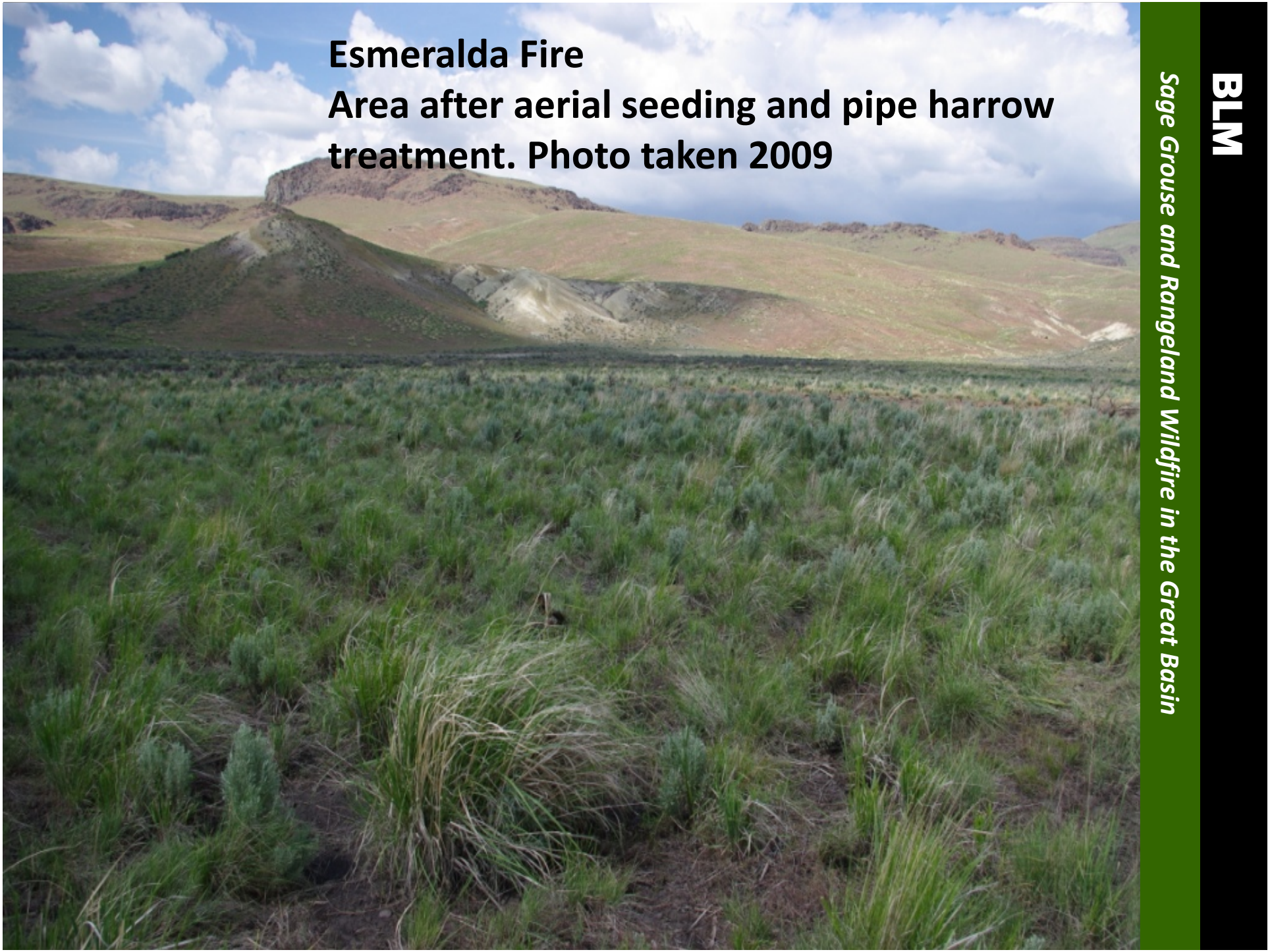
Esmeralda Fire
Area after aerial seeding and pipe harrow treatment. Photo taken 2009
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Esmeralda Fire
Photo taken June 2011
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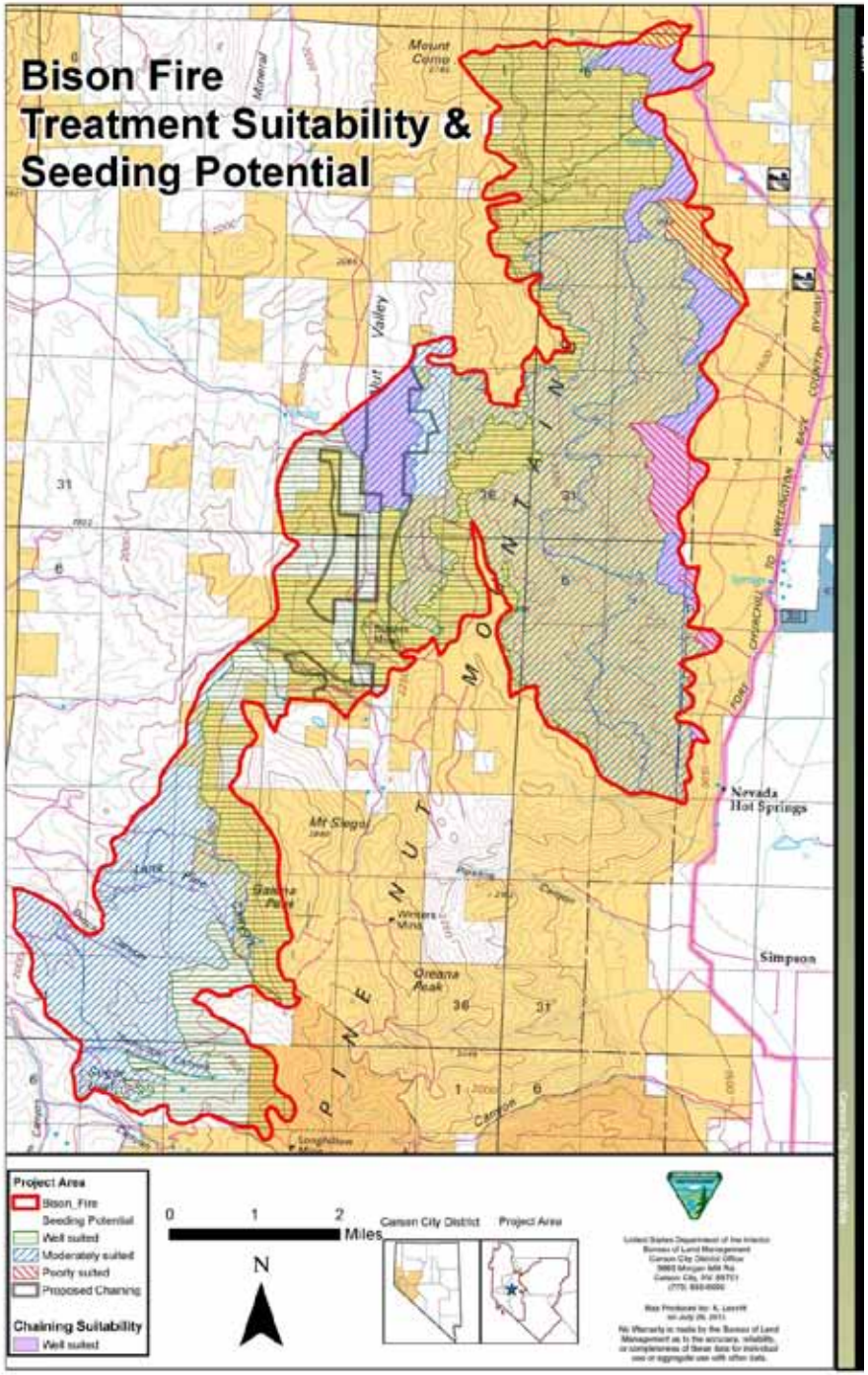
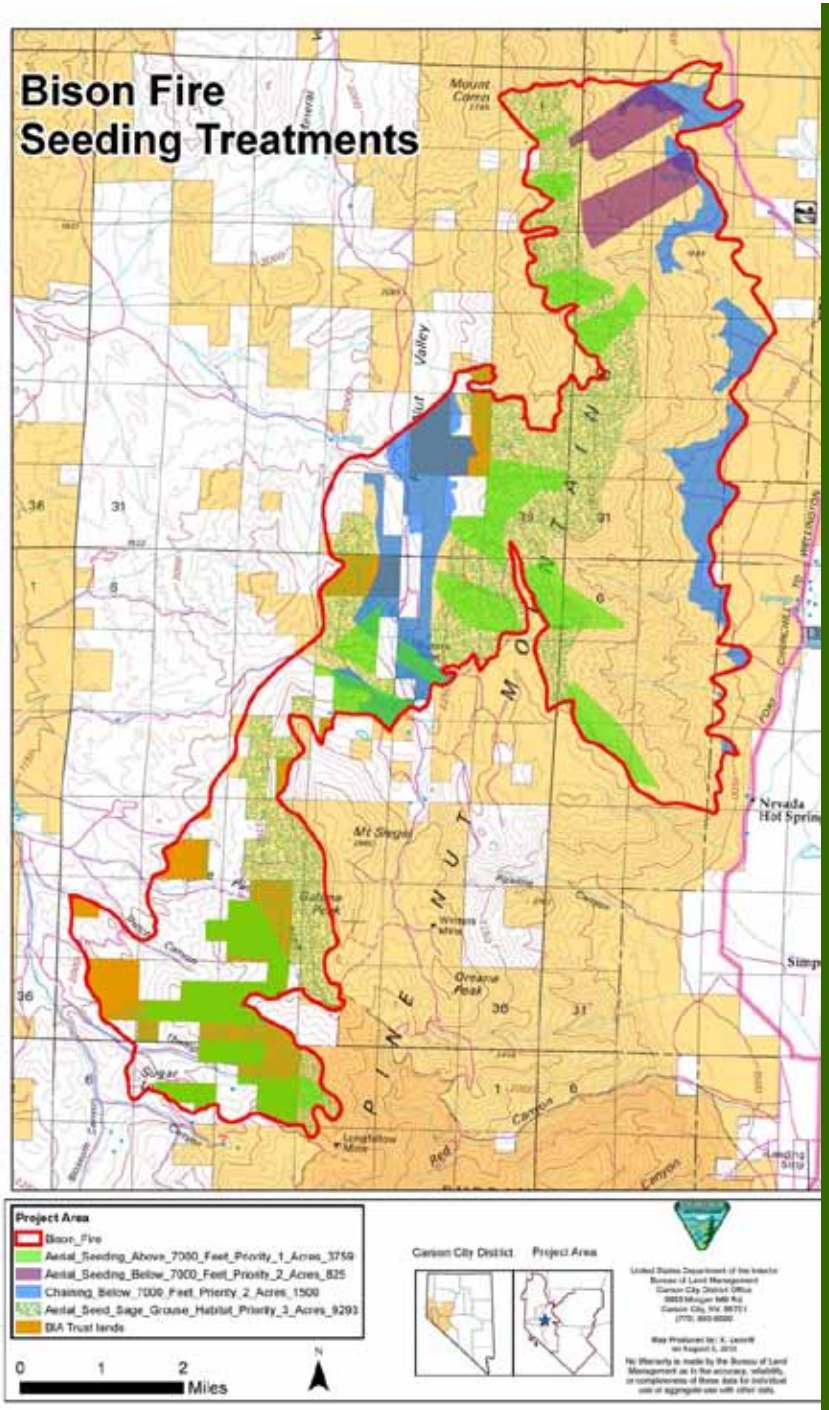
Bison Fire Example

- 2013 Fire
- Limited Emergency Stabilization Funding that year
- Extensive GIS analysis to plan seeding
- Seeding treatments planned based on priority habitat, elevation, soils, precipitation, degradation potential and seeding suitability (similar to Resistance and Resiliency concepts)
- Multi-agency process





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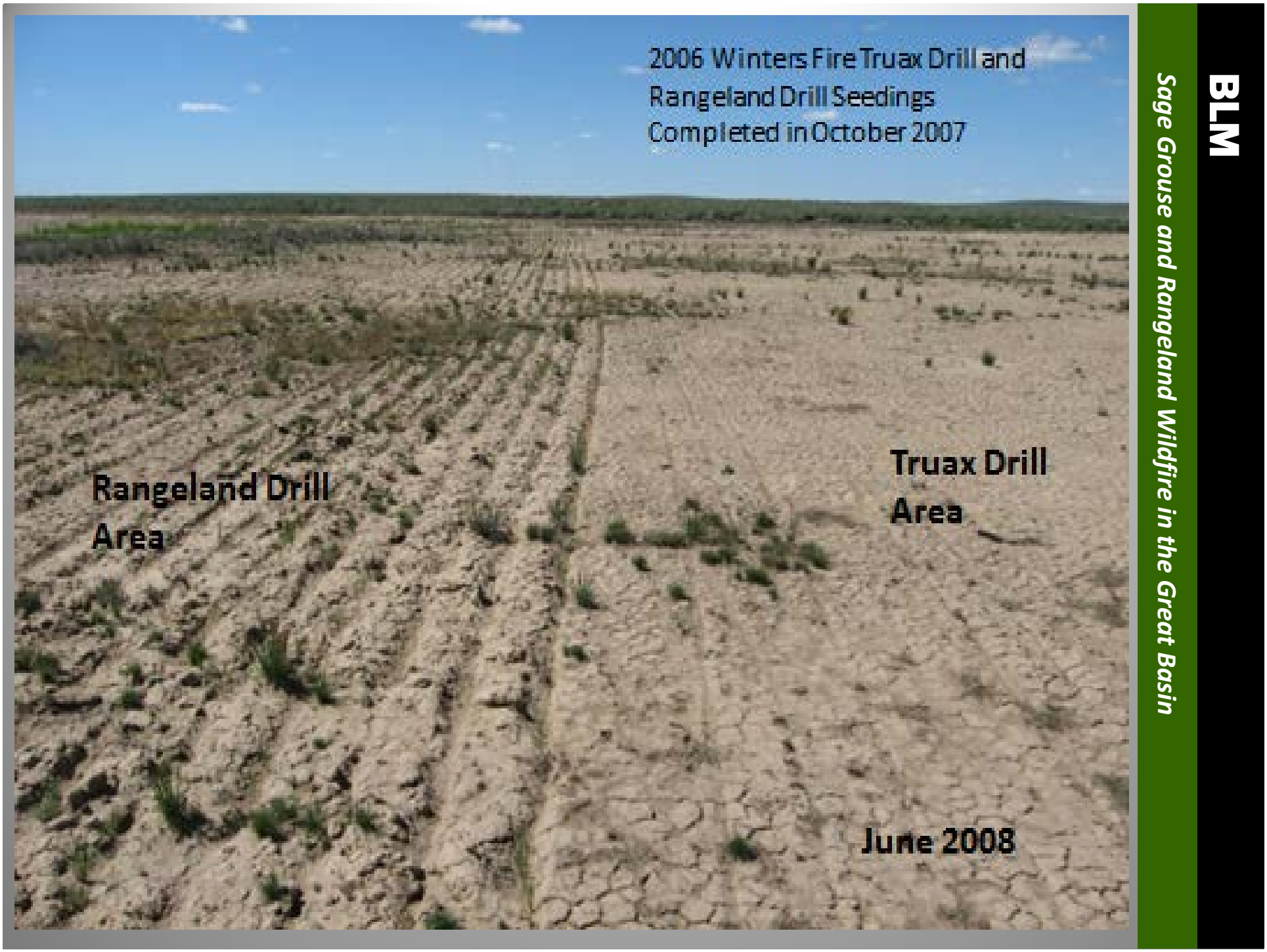
NV BLM Native Plant Issues

- Need more locally adapted species for restoration
- Consistent funding stream to make market attractive to plant growers
- Only 1 cultivar from Nevada available commercially – Toe Jam Creek squirrel tail


2006 Winters Fire Truax Drill and
Rangeland Drill Seedings
Completed in October 2007
Rangeland Drill
Area
Truax Drill
Area
June 2008
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2010 44 Fire Drill Seeding Area in middle of photo was not seeded and is dominated with halogeton.
May, 2014
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Challenges

- How to incorporate new science into planning and implementation
  - Timing
  - Consistency
- Integrated funding for restoration projects
  - Differing program objectives and requirements
- Timing of funding allocations

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